

with the beginning of written history.* They indeed may be almost comparable in antiquity with the annual flight of the swallows. They have flowed in various directions, but the main current has trended from north to south. Since until recent centuries the temptations of wealth and luxury have lain southwards, where conditions of life have been easier and more productive. India owes its intellectual glories to tribes of northmen. Generally styled the Aryans,⁵⁵ who some 3,500 years ago broke through its mountain barriers and settled in the Indo-Gangetic plain. They introduced into India the Sanskrit language. The modern tongue which is most nearly akin to it is the Lettish, which is spoken on the shores of the Baltic : and, from this fact and from references to scenery which occur in ancient Sanskrit hymns, we may assume without rashness that the Aryans had their original home in Northern Europe. It appears from their early literature that their women were free, and were actually permitted to choose their own husbands. But most of the Aryan tribes took wives from amongst the daughters of the Indian soil : the Indian climate cannot have been congenial to them, and by the beginning of our era they appear to have lost their northern characteristics. They have bequeathed to India a literature which may be compared with that of classical Greece. But within historical times their blood has

not been able to stir the habitual placidity of Oriental thought.

The ancient civilizations of Egypt and Assvria appear to have had much in common with the conditions of modern China. The people were fast bound by ties of family and religion: their lives were directed by vivid conceptions of existence after death. Their houses were small,